

House for Ops

28 May 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Testimony of Assistant Secretary Arthur Sylvester, Department of Defense before Moss Subcommittee Concerning Military Space Information Policy

1. The hearing was held in executive session. The Chairman requested that no notes be taken by persons in attendance. The Agency will, however, be able to procure a copy of the transcript of the hearing as soon as it is transcribed. A transcript was taken by a Ward and Paul reporter. During the morning Chairman John E. Moss (D., Calif.) and Representative George Meader (R., Mich.) were the only members of the Subcommittee (Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee) in attendance. The hearing started late due to the unavoidable tardiness of Mr. Meader and after approximately forty-five minutes the Chairman recessed until 2:30 p.m. so that Representative Henry S. Reuss (D., Wis.) and Representative Ogden R. Reid (R., N.Y.) could be present.

2. Mr. Sylvester was accompanied by Col. Clyde M. Dillender, Mr. Hunt Clements, Captain Hugh Robinson, and two or three others who were not identified. Present from the Committee staff were Mr. Samuel Archibald, Staff Administrator, Mr. Vincent Augliere, Mr. Jack Madison, Mr. William Barnaby, and two others not identified.

3. Secretary Sylvester had no prepared statement but worked from a dossier of the various information directives, and memoranda and letters concerning information policy. The over-all question and answer treatment of the various topics covered was general in nature. Questions during the day covered two general areas: Military space information policy and Cuban information policy. A third item on the Committee agenda, which will be reached sometime tomorrow, 29 May, is "Future Guidelines."

4. Committee interest appeared to be taken with reasons for failure of the Defense Department to include unsuccessful Soviet missile shots with the other information furnished by the Department to NASA for inclusion in their public reports. The Secretary indicated in general that the Department transmits to NASA information on unsuccessful shots where the fact of the matter has been reported by the Soviet themselves or even by another country, and DOD has confirmation of the facts [redacted]. The Department does not provide information even though we have official confirmation where the Soviet themselves or some other country has not publicized the fact. We will not provide a propaganda vehicle even for their failures. In this area it was also noted, in response to questions, that release of information on unsuccessful shots where DOD has confirmation by [redacted] could tend to reveal U.S. capabilities in monitoring Soviet missile activity. In illustrating what the loss of intelligence gathering capability really means, Secretary Sylvester mentioned the loss of the U-2. Neither the illustration nor the topic was given undue attention by either Mr. Sylvester or the Committee members. Mr. Meader noted that he did not understand how the report of Soviet missile failures could compromise intelligence gathering capabilities where the Soviets certainly know that [redacted] can trace missile shots.

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5. Early in the afternoon the questioning proceeded to the matter of the Cuban information policy and after about two hours reached a climax with Mr. Moss joining Mr. Reid in rather strong denunciation of the policy of requiring Department of Defense personnel to report all contacts and interviews with the press to Secretary Sylvester's office. Mr. Moss, as did Mr. Reid, found the policy one which patently and obviously inhibits the action of the press and appears to provide little worthwhile benefit for the Department. The fact of this summation by Mr. Moss is noted for the reason that no conclusions as far as Committee attitude or desires were apparent during the coverage of the military space information policy question.

6. On Tuesday, May 28th, the Committee will retrace its steps on these two questions, probably following a format of listing each of the complaints that has been made against the Defense Department's information policy, and give the Secretary a chance to state again his position on the matter or to refute the given items.

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7. The treatment of the topics as noted above by both the Committee and Mr. Sylvester was general in nature. It does not appear that the questioning will progress further into areas of interest to this Agency. Contact will be maintained with the Committee on a daily basis however to follow the course of the hearing.



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